

Friends

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Summary: A special friend helps Black Canary cope with Green Arrow's death.

Friends

Summary: Dinah is stunned by the news of Ollie's death. A special friend offers her his own unique brand of comfort.

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Friends By Syl Francis

He was gone. She couldn't believe it. Ten years together and he was gone.

The news came as a shock. She was still stunned. The plane carrying Oliver Queen and 158 other passengers disappeared over the Atlantic Ocean. Reason unknown.

One minute it was on the radar, the next it was gone.

And with it, the only man she'd ever loved.

The memorial service at the JLA satellite was a blur. Superman spoke a few words. Dinah supposed that he'd said all of the appropriate things, but she couldn't recall any of them. Besides, it hadn't mattered. It hadn't seemed right. Hal should've been standing up there, but he was gone, too.

Dinah glanced over at the small group of younger heroes, the former Teen Titans who'd gathered protectively around Roy. He was holding tightly to his little girl, Lian. She couldn't understand why Grandpa Ollie was never coming back.

Lian caught her eye and instantly held her arms out for her.

"Gramma Canary!" she wailed.

Dinah felt her lower lip tremble and the tears begin again. Unable to look at Roy and Lian, the two people who'd loved Ollie as much as she had, Dinah quickly turned on her heel and ran out of the JLA chapel.

She turned a blind corner and ran directly into a brick wall. "Ohhh!" she cried, falling backwards. A steel grip on her wrist saved her and pulled her back up to her feet. By now, Dinah couldn't see from the unchecked tears, and a wracking sob escaped from her lips. She felt like she was on the verge of collapse, her knees giving way.

Before she knew what was happening, the same strong grip lifted her as easily as a child and began to carry her. Blinking the tears from her eyes, Dinah looked up at her unknown benefactor and almost screamed--Batman! Dinah knew that she should protest. That she should insist she was more than capable of walking. But the feel of being held again in strong arms that she knew would never let go, stopped her.

Instead, Dinah gratefully laid her head on the powerful shoulder of the Dark Knight and allowed herself to be carried to the suite that she'd once shared with Ollie.

Dinah watched him from lowered eyelashes. Batman had hardly spoken a word since he'd set her down on the sofa. He took something out of his utility belt, waved it around the room a bit, and then made a beeline towards the cabinet where Ollie had kept his stash of liquor.

"That belt of yours must come in handy, Batman," she said wryly. Batman didn't acknowledge her comment, just opened the cabinet, took out her favorite liqueur, and poured her a generous drink.

"Here. Drink this," he ordered.

Dinah's eyebrows shot to the top of her forehead. Who does he think he is, she fumed? And how did he know what type of liquor she preferred? Nevertheless, she took the proffered drink and downed it in a single gulp.

In the next instant, she jumped up and whipped the glass against the far wall of the room. The force of the throw shattered it on impact.

She stood unmoving, staring as the remains of the dark liqueur slowly oozed down the wall.

"Feel better?" a deep growl asked.

Furious, Dinah leaped and spinning in midair, she kicked out, aiming for her teammate's head. He moved his head at the last instant, but she still managed to connect with a glancing blow.

"What do *you* care?" she screamed, lunging at him. Batman, looking slightly dazed from the kick, sidestepped the move. At this moment, Dinah felt as if a red haze suddenly overtook her. She attacked with the fury of a raging tempest. Leaping, spinning, kicking, striking out with her fists, she vented the wrath she felt against the universe at Batman.

The battle seemed to last an eternity, or maybe it was less than an eye blink. Eventually, the red haze lifted and Dinah realized that she'd given Batman the best she could offer, and he'd taken each of her blows and kicks, turning his body just enough to minimize the force of the hits.

Batman had *allowed* her to hit him, to use him as punching bag. And he hadn't blocked a single blow.

Feeling her rage slowly subside, Dinah crouched breathing raggedly. She still maintained her defensive position, her hands and forearms held stiffly upright ready to wage war.

"Feel better?" The same deep growl asked once more; however, this time Dinah heard what she hadn't heard before. Compassion. Understanding. Friendship.

Nodding wordlessly, Dinah again felt the tears come. Batman was instantly there, holding her, adding his strength to hers.

"He was a good man, Dinah," Batman said quietly. "I'll miss him, too."

"Y-You will?" she asked, surprised.

"He was my friend," Batman said simply. He stepped back, deliberately dropping his hands down to his sides. "Will you be all right?" he asked.

Dinah nodded.

"In that case," he said, "I'd best be going." He turned to go, his cape whipping behind him. His grim demeanor exuded the embodiment of terror.

"Batman?"

He stopped, looking back at her with a single raised eyebrow.

"Thank you."

The End ####

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